

State Accepting Public Comment on Plan to Reallocate Funds to Economic Revitalization Program

Oct. 9, 2013

BATON ROUGE, La. - The Louisiana Office of Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit is accepting public comments on the reallocation of \$5 million in disaster recovery funds from the Gustav/Ike Non-Profit Homeowner Rehabilitation Program to the Economic Revitalization Program.

The Non-Profit Homeowner Rehabilitation Program was created after hurricanes Gustav and Ike to replicate an existing program created after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which provided grants to nonprofits to help homeowners meet the gap in rebuilding storm or flood-damaged homes. The state subsequently determined that there was not a pressing need for this program, given the other housing programs available at the local and state-wide levels.

However, hurricanes Gustav and Ike caused an estimated impact of up to \$15 billion to the state's economy by severely disrupting many businesses via physical damages, power outages and workforce displacements. The state has identified a continued and previously unanticipated need to focus on major economic development initiatives aimed at establishing industries and developing a workforce appropriate to the unique geographic, climatic, population and growth conditions of the Gustav-Ike impacted areas.

The \$5 million in unobligated funds will be reallocated to the \$61.7 million Economic Revitalization Program to address unmet economic recovery and resiliency needs in the hurricane-impacted areas, with the goal of spurring long-term job creation and economic sustainability.

The program will be administered by the Louisiana Office of Community Development's Disaster Recovery Unit in accordance with disaster recovery Community Development Block Grant rules and regulations.

Action Plan Amendment 21 can be accessed online at http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/DR/GI_ActionPlans.htm.

The formal public comment period for the plan begins today, Oct. 9, 2013 and continues until 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2013. After accepting public comments, the state will submit the plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for final federal approval.

Citizens, community leaders and elected officials can access the plan and submit comments online by visiting http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/DR/GI_ActionPlans.htm and opening "Action Plan Amendment 21". A copy of the plans can be requested by calling (225) 219-9600.

Members of the public can submit comments several ways:

- Using the online form at http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/DR/GI_ActionPlans.htm;
- Emailing them to ocd@la.gov;

- Mailing them to Disaster Recovery Unit, P.O. Box 94095, 70804-9095, Attn: Janice Lovett;
- Faxing them to the attention of Janice Lovett at (225) 219-9605.

The Disaster Recovery Unit within the Office of Community Development is dedicated to helping Louisiana's citizens recover from hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac. As the state's central point for hurricane recovery, the OCD-DRU manages the most extensive rebuilding effort in American history, working closely with local, state and federal partners to ensure that Louisiana recovers safer and stronger than before.

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